

The biographical sketch of William C. Norton that is reproduced on this and the following page was discovered by DWP in COMMEMORATIVE BIOGRAPHICAL RECORD OF NORTHEASTERN PENNSYLVANIA (Chicago: J. H. Beers and Co., 1900, pp. 523-524) on 05-28-1979.

WILLIAM C. NORTON. The world instinctively pays deference to the man whose success in life is worthily achieved. This is a progressive age, and he who does not advance is soon left far behind. In Mr. Norton we find one of the most successful, enterprising and progressive farmers and stock raisers of Wayne county, and through his energetic efforts and capable management Ridge Farm, in Clinton township—the home of the Nortons—has become famous far and wide.

Sheldon Norton (grandfather of our subject) was born in 1793, in Connecticut, and in the spring of 1812 came to Wayne county, Penn. After reading law for some time, in Mt. Pleasant township, he was appointed, by Gov. Findlay, prothonotary and clerk of the county, when but twenty-five years of age. After receiving his appointment he returned to his native town in Connecticut, where he married Harriet Spencer, and brought his bride to his new home in Bethany, Wayne county. For two years he filled the offices to which he had been appointed, and then removed to Clinton, where he built the house, long known as the Norton homestead, which is still standing. In 1831 he was appointed agent of the American Sunday-school Union, and at once entered upon the arduous duties of that office, riding the first year 7,000 miles on horseback through the South and West, establishing Sunday-schools. The family still preserve the manuscript of several of his addresses delivered at Sunday-school conventions. These are written in the neat, clear handwriting of the author, and their thoughts prove him to have been a man of advanced ideas, and fully aware of the importance of the work in which he was so successfully engaged. He died in this service, in 1838, honored and respected by all who knew him. Among his papers was a genealogical record of the Norton family, tracing it back for forty generations. The name was originally spelled Norville, and among its later representatives were Thomas Norton, a noted English lawyer and playwright; Gre Norton, one of the signers of the death warrant of King Charles; and Col. Richard Norton, a member of the Council of 1642, and a great favorite of Oliver Cromwell.

E. K. Norton (our subject's father) was born in Bethany, Wayne county, June 3, 1819, and was given a thorough education, which well fitted him for life's responsible duties. During early manhood he engaged in manufacturing in Aldenville, Wayne county, but later turned his attention to agricultural pursuits in Clinton township, becoming one of its most successful general farmers and fruit growers. He was deacon in the Church, and took an active and prominent part in all Church work.

In Mt. Pleasant, January 5, 1843, he married Miss Clarissa N. McMullen, and they became the parents of five children, namely: Oscar M., born March 12, 1846, died August 2, 1861; Sheldon, born June 15, 1847, makes his home in Pennsylvania; M. Lizzie, born July 3, 1850, is the wife of E. H. Ladyard, of Mt. Pleasant; William C. is next in the family; and Emily J., born May 11, 1857, is the wife of C. P. Perham, of New Jersey.

In Clinton township William C. Norton was born October 10, 1852, and after attending the common schools of that locality was a student for some time in the Delaware Literary Institute, of Franklin, N. Y. From youth he has been a careful observer of all improved methods of agriculture and stock raising, and a thoughtful reader of standard works and periodicals upon these subjects. He is therefore one of the best informed farmers and stock breeders of the State, and has met with remarkable success in his chosen calling. His knowledge of pedigrees, records, etc., and his ability to quickly discern the good points of any animal, has made him in great demand as a judge of cattle and hogs at the great eastern fairs, and given him an enviable reputation among stock breeders. At the age of twenty-one he entered extensively into the business of improving and breeding Berkshire hogs, and the Ridge Farm herd, under his management, was the largest and best in the country. It was exhibited year after year at all the leading fairs of the West, and won the largest amount of prize money of any herd in America. Mr. Norton is still engaged in stock breeding, and is now paying particular attention to the raising of blooded horses.

On October 9, 1877, Mr. Norton was married to Miss Mary M. Stone, daughter of Lemuel Stone. She died July 28, 1878, leaving one child, Oscar M., born July 24, 1878. Mr. Norton was again married, December 3, 1879, his second union being with Miss Jessie M., daughter of A. R. and Sarah (Burns) Peck, and to them were born three children, whose names and dates of birth are as follows: Albert E., August 31, 1881; Elwin S., May 23, 1889; and E. Kirk, August 16, 1892. The last named died May 25, 1897.

Mr. Norton is a charter member and lecturer of Clinton Grange, No. 1031, and is a member of Pomona Grange, of Wayne county. He takes an active and prominent part in the work of the Farmers' Institute throughout the State, and is a director of the Wayne County Agricultural Society and the Patriotic Order Sons of America. The Republican party always finds in him a stalwart supporter, and he has efficiently served his fellow citizens as county treasurer, supervisor and town clerk. In